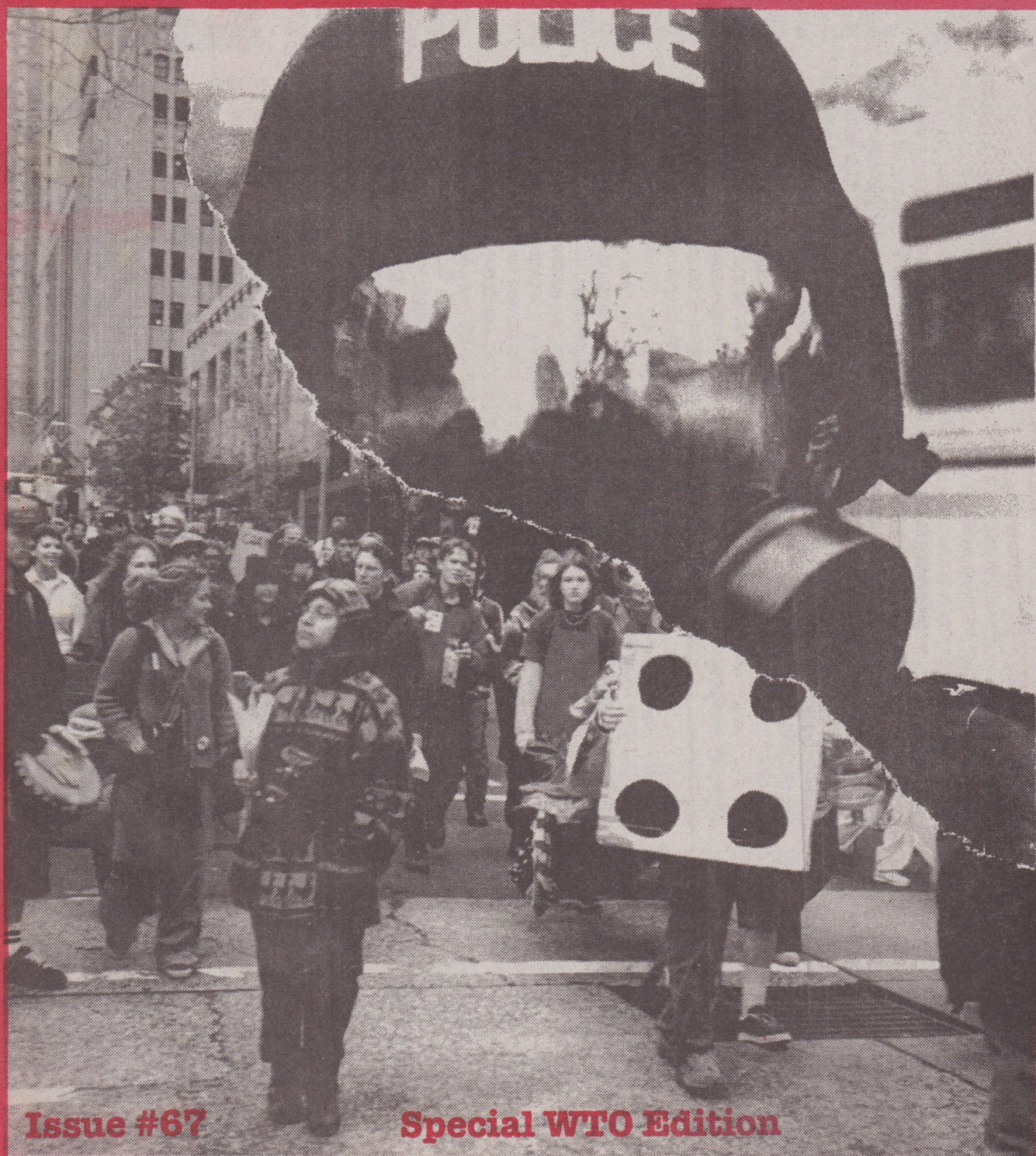


SLINGSHOT



Issue #67

Special WTO Edition

"Here we are protecting Nike, McDonalds, the Gap and all the while I'm thinking 'Where are the police? These anarchists should have been arrested.'"

--Medea Benjamin, Director of Global Exchange, as quoted in 12/2/99 NY Times

SLINGSHOT



Rubber bullet in the back at point-blank range for non-violent blockade

We Win!

But don't thank mainstream environmentalists or unions

by Jeffrey St. Clair & Alexander Cockburn First!ers, Ruckus Society agitators,

Battle of Seattle

How direct action shut down the WTO and freed our minds

By Moonlite

In the City center of one of the nation's most prominent metropolises and the Northwest hub of free trade, an assortment of opposition forces to the World Trade Organization brought the system to its knees.

It was not a violent protest. In fact, the core of what shut down the conference, and brought to the Seattle Police Department a tactical defeat, was the highly organized non-violent direct action strategy of the Direct Action Network. There were other factors to be sure. One was the participation of labor. Another was the broad display of mainstream and liberal organizations who came to town, swelling the size of the demonstrations, and providing a sense of safety to the more radical participants whose focus lay in the streets.

We were not passive. We locked down, we blockaded, we were mobile, and some of us damaged property. But most of all we were organized and we believed in physically challenging the powers that be, powers that included not just the WTO, but the whole system of global capitalism which it has come to represent.

There were a lot of us. We blended easily with the local population of youth and other people who were happy to join us at the

two marches beginning that morning. The gathering point for the Direct Action Network (DAN) contingent was 7 a.m., just up the hill from downtown in the hip, alternative-type neighborhood of Capitol Hill. It was still dark and there was a steady drizzle at the time the march took off.

Of course this was not the real beginning to the events that would later unfold. Hard-working activists had come to Seattle early and had spent weeks and even months preparing for the big week, and in particular Tuesday, the big day. Tensions had been running high all week, people had hardly been sleeping, and by the time Tuesday morning rolled around many of the key organizers were, quite frankly, already fried. But it didn't matter now--the adrenaline had kicked in, filling the air with a curious, though anxious, elation.

As the march moved down the hill and towards the Convention Center, various clusters of protesters began to break off, making their way to the different parts of the perimeter of the soon-to-be-besieged area. Organization for the day had been thorough, with the perimeter of the Convention Center divided up like a pie. Most groups or clusters of groups already knew which area they were going to go to and what they were going to do



Rubber bullet in the back at point-blank range for non-violent blockade

We Win!

But don't thank mainstream environmentalists or unions

by Jeffrey St. Clair & Alexander Cockburn

Beyond the wildest hopes of the street warriors, five days in Seattle brought us one victory after another. The protesters, initially shunned and denounced by the respectable "inside strategists," scorned by the press, and gassed and bloodied by the cops and national guard: shut down the opening ceremony; prevented Clinton from addressing the WTO delegates at the Wednesday night gala; turned the corporate press from prim denunciations of "mindless anarchy" to bitter criticisms of police brutality; forced the WTO to cancel its closing ceremonies and to adjourn in disorder and confusion, without an agenda for the next round.

In the annals of popular protest in America, these were shining hours, achieved entirely outside the conventional arena of orderly protest and white paper activism and the timid bleats of the professional leadership of big labor and environmentalists. This truly was an insurgency from below in which all those who strove to moderate and deflect the turbulent flood of popular outrage managed to humiliate themselves. The contradiction between the demure agenda of the genteel element and the robust, tear-it-all-down approach of the street legions was already apparent by Tuesday.

First!ers, Ruckus Society agitators, anarchists and other courageous troublemakers sustained baton charges, tear gas and rubber bullets, hopefully awaiting reinforcement from the big labor rally taking place around the space needle, some fifteen or twenty blocks from downtown. As the morning ticked away and the cops got rougher, the street warriors kept asking, "Where are the labor marchers?," expecting that at any moment thousands of longshoremen and teamsters would reinforce them in the desperate fray.

But the absent legions of labor never showed. Suppose they had. Suppose there had been 30,000 to 40,000 protesters around the convention center, vowing to keep it shut all week. Would the cops have charged such a force? Downtown could have been held all night, and perhaps President Bill would have been forced to make his welcoming address from SeaTac or from the sanctuary of his ardent campaign funder, the Boeing Company. That would have been a humiliation for imperial power of historic proportions, like the famous greeting the Wobblies organized to greet president Woodrow Wilson after the breaking of the Seattle general strike in 1919 when workers and their families lined the streets, block after block, standing in furious silence as the President's motorcade passed by. Wilson had his steel helmet

system to its knees.

It was not a violent protest. In fact, the core of what shut down the conference, and brought to the Seattle Police Department a tactical defeat, was the highly organized non-violent direct action strategy of the Direct Action Network. There were other factors to be sure. One was the participation of labor. Another was the broad display of mainstream and liberal organizations who came to town, swelling the size of the demonstrations, and providing a sense of safety to the more radical participants whose focus lay in the streets.

We were not passive. We locked down, we blockaded, we were mobile, and some of us damaged property. But most of all we were organized and we believed in physically challenging the powers that be, powers that included not just the WTO, but the whole system of global capitalism which it has come to represent.

There were a lot of us. We blended easily with the local population of youth and other people who were happy to join us at the barricades. And we weren't going to give up no matter how much tear gas was fired at us. We were determined.

The day's events started early, with at least

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Of course this was not the real beginning to the events that would later unfold. Hard-working activists had come to Seattle early and had spent weeks and even months preparing for the big week, and in particular Tuesday, the big day. Tensions had been running high all week, people had hardly been sleeping, and by the time Tuesday morning rolled around many of the key organizers were, quite frankly, already fried. But it didn't matter now--the adrenaline had kicked in, filling the air with a curious, though anxious, elation.

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When the marchers arrived, various

Continued on page 6

ABCs of the WTO

Global capitalism threatens democracy, workers and the planet; but the tide is finally turning . . .

by PB Floyd

Because of Seattle, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has become a household word, synonymous with "undemocratic," "secret," "anti-worker" and "anti-environment." But the WTO is but a single institution in the web of economic globalization designed to ensure corporate domination based on "free" trade, the myth that economic growth is progress, and the delusion that economic growth can continue forever, in spite of the limits imposed by nature.

The WTO was created in 1995 with power to impose trade sanctions against any signatory country which maintains "barriers to trade." These "barriers" can mean almost anything, including protective tariffs, which aim to preserve local industries and farms from competing with goods imported from countries where human rights and welfare standards are lower. Many other laws

turtles are considered "barriers to trade" by the WTO.

Any member country can request that the WTO take action against another country which has laws which are allegedly "barriers to trade". WTO trade experts, drawn from big business and not elected by any government, then meet in secret to decide if the challenged law is a "barrier to trade." The WTO's decision is not subject to appeal and an "offending" nation must decide between repealing its law, which may have been democratically passed, or suffering crippling trade restrictions.

The WTO is the main multi-national body charged with promoting free trade, but the process of globalization also depends on actions taken by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and most importantly, a few hundred multi-national corporations which own and control the

initially shunned and denounced by the respectable "inside strategists," scorned by the press, and gassed and bloodied by the cops and national guard: shut down the opening ceremony; prevented Clinton from addressing the WTO delegates at the Wednesday night gala; turned the corporate press from prim denunciations of "mindless anarchy" to bitter criticisms of police brutality; forced the WTO to cancel its closing ceremonies and to adjourn in disorder and confusion, without an agenda for the next round.

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All day long, Tuesday, November 30, the street warriors in downtown Seattle vindicated their pledge to shut down the first day of the WTO talks, in itself a rousing victory. Locked down Earth-

awaiting reinforcement from the big labor rally taking place around the space needle, some fifteen or twenty blocks from downtown. As the morning ticked away and the cops got rougher, the street warriors kept asking, "Where are the labor marchers?," expecting that at any moment thousands of longshoremen and teamsters would reinforce them in the desperate fray.

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This might-have-been is not posed out of churlishness, but to encourage a sense of

Continued on page 6

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The WTO was created in 1995 with power to impose trade sanctions against any signatory country which maintains "barriers to trade." These "barriers" can mean almost anything, including protective tariffs, which aim to preserve local industries and farms from competing with goods imported from countries where human rights and welfare standards are lower. Many other laws, including those which impose labor or environmental standards on industrial production, are also considered "barriers." For instance, US laws which prohibit the sale of shrimp caught in nets that endanger sea

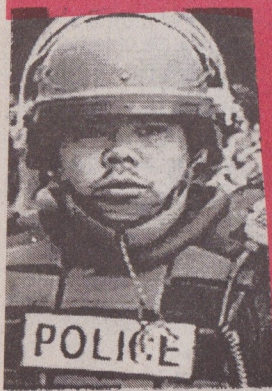
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The WTO is the main multi-national body charged with promoting free trade, but the process of globalization also depends on actions taken by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and most importantly, a few hundred multi-national corporations which are rapidly transforming the lives of billions around the world.

"Globalization" is the process by which the entire world is being merged into one huge market, based on "free trade" economic rules

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Special Extra Edition

Special! SLINGSHOT

Slingshot is a quarterly, independent, radical newspaper published in the East Bay since 1988.

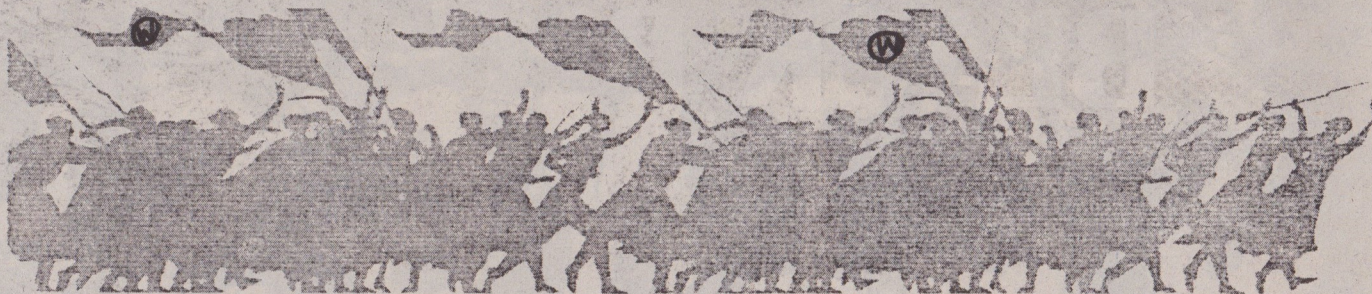
Welcome to our emergency, extra special WTO edition!

The idea for this emergency issue was hatched on the streets of Seattle, and the whole thing came together in a week fueled by our collective adrenaline from Seattle. (Normally it takes 2 months to do an issue!) We got so many articles in just 5 days that we had to shorten every single article we have printed, plus we cut more than half of the articles we received. Therefore, we can't promise that we've covered everything important that happened in Seattle, but we hope that this extra edition contributes to the important debate raging in the wake of Seattle.

Seattle was big. Possibly even the beginning of the radicalization of a new generation. Many of us were reinspired and those long, cold, endless nights in the Slingshot loft now seem completely worthwhile. Finally, Americans are starting to catch up with the rest of the world in realizing the insidious and complex nature of the global economy and "Free Trade". We hope this issue fills your appetite for first hand information and ongoing dialogue and inspires you to ongoing action in your communities.

We're always looking for writers, artists, photographers, editors, distributors and free-thinkers to make Slingshot better. Slingshot accepts unsolicited articles, art, photos and letters. No poetry! Please send a disk if you can. Also, this is expensive. Send \$20 now!

Editorial decisions about Slingshot are made by the Slingshot collective. Articles do not necessarily represent the opinions of everyone



DEBATE ON TACTICS

by PB Floyd

In the wake of the breaking of a few windows in downtown Seattle during the WTO protests on November 30, everyone wants to debate the "violence/non-violence" or more aptly the "property destruction/no property destruction" question. Rather than continuing this tired debate, we should be talking about how everyone--no matter where they fall in the debate--should be smarter and more strategic about using *tactics* to achieve identifiable goals.

In Seattle, the non-violent, civil disobedience tactic worked beyond anyone's wildest dreams, mostly because the Seattle police couldn't figure out that perhaps they should arrest, rather than shoot and torture, the peaceful crowd. But this tactic doesn't and won't always work, and adopting it like a religion, rather than as a sometimes effective tactic, is unfortunate.

Similarly, property destruction in one

form or another can be and often is an extremely effective tactic. This tactic is not "violence", and where practiced with discretion, should only affect faceless corporations. These huge corporations, along with governments, are undoubtedly the most violent and destructive institutions in the world. How many forests, villages, neighborhoods, family farms, and individual lives have been crushed by corporations, compared with the number of humans that have been inconvenienced by a few broken windows? The folks who broke windows in Seattle generally chose excellent targets: Bank of America, US Bancorp, Key Bank, Washington Mutual Bank, Fidelity Investment, the Gap, McDonalds, Old Navy, Banana Republic, Niketown, Warner Bros., Planet Hollywood, Starbucks. . . Only one store, a jewelry store, that had its windows broken was not a clearly chosen, corporate target.

The fact that they chose good targets deserving to have their windows broken, however, does not mean that the window breaking was an effective tactic under the circumstances. In fact, as much as it was great to see Niketown boarded up, the window breaking was unfortunate. It was obvious by 9 or 10 in the morning that we had won the Battle of the Seattle using completely non-destructive, non-violent, and generally non-controversial tactics, which could be embraced by the vast majority of the population.

I don't disagree with the decision to break windows, but I hope it was a conscious decision made after considering the political situation, the military situation, and with

some goal and politics in mind. I fear that it was not. Keep in mind that at least at this stage, we can't hope to beat global corporate domination with hammers and rocks--it is simply too vast and too well defended. Property destruction has to be about manipulating symbols and making a political point.

While it is a mistake to think that the struggle against global capitalism is a popularity contest necessitating concern about the anarchist "polling numbers" so we can somehow win some mythical election of "capitalism" vs. "cooperation", public opinion and sensibilities is not irrelevant. The most amazing thing about Seattle was the ability of many diverse sectors of



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Volume 1, Number 67 • Circulation: 10,000

Slingshot Newspaper

Sponsored by Long Haul

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SLINGSHOT

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JOBS

ARE

JAILS

By Ronnie Burk

On the morning of Dec. 6, 1999, marching with over four hundred people protesting the presence of WTO officials at Bank of America in downtown San Francisco, I found myself once again doing the cake walk with this city's bankrupt left. Following the tremendous earth-shattering explosion in Seattle, where some 500 kids rocked the multinational corporations to their foundations, exposing for all the world to see that US capitalism is no longer safe within its own borders, it was truly insulting to see the old guard in SF up to their usual theatrics. There were, of course,

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So it was with a sense of humor that I started chanting "Jobs are Jails!", a turn of words that my young anarchist and animal-rights friends found amusing, and also began chanting. The knee-jerk left found our message so offensive that Rebecca Solnit found it necessary to walk up to me and accuse me of "elitism." That was a remark I found to be both racist and elitist, coming from a white woman in a black flannel suit who likes to brag

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The over 90 percent of the population who work for a wage and are therefore generally powerless over their lives are all potential radicals and allies. Don't forget it.

about time.

Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange made quite a show of herself after the initial trashing of downtown Seattle. Decrying the violence, getting out brooms, aiding the police, such activists did us all a favor by showing their true interests. In their desire to sit at the table with representatives of the corporate establishment, they have sold out the very people we must support if we are serious about bringing on the real changes this planet so desperately needs to survive the next century.

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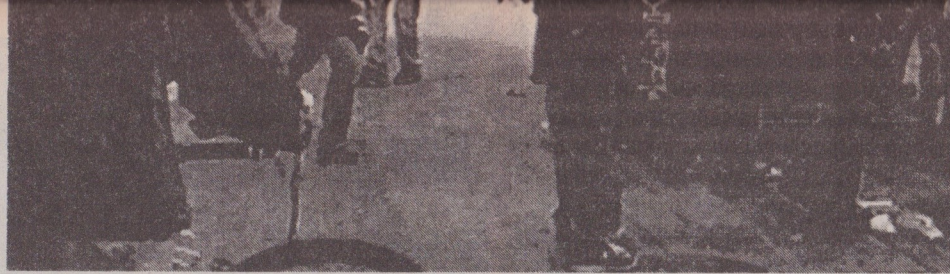
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Subscriptions to Slingshot are \$1 per issue (bulk mail pre-paid) or \$2 for First Class Mail after the issue comes out. International is \$2.50 per issue. Back issues are also available.

Bulk copies are available for 50 cents per issue for 6 or more copies, \$1 international.

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by destroying the very edifices of bourgeois capitalism, the dried-up crusty rinds of what is left of the left were only able to recite their tired old litanies of "jobs not jails."

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"My dear," I informed her, "my mother was a campesina and worked in the fields as a child. I myself have done every shit job in the universe, from washing dishes to picking up garbage, and let me tell you, jobs are jails!" Her comment seemed to encapsulate everything that is wrong with the left, afraid of revolt, hoping to legitimize itself by promoting bogus "pro-union" agendas, trying not to offend the tourists and Christmas shoppers, leashed in, muzzled, with blinders on, just where the union bosses and their bosses, the corporate elite, want them. These (anarchists) don't want to sit at the table and talk--they want to turn the table upside down and pull the plug on high finance capitalism, and all I can say is that it's

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Whether it is Global Exchange, Mother Jones, the Sierra Club, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, Pacifica Radio, or other despicable examples of the corporate left, one thing is clear--none of these organizations are interested in destroying the system, as they need to ensure their positions as "paid staff." For those of you who are afraid of flying glass, who only see "elitism" in the cause of freedom, who insist now is not the right time to bring down the system, who prefer to sing rather than riot in the streets while the children of Indonesia are denied bananas and rice and millions across this nation are denied the simple pleasure of having a place to live, I say, stand clear. We are entering a new era that demands new ways of strategy and subversion and the only thing limiting us is our own lack of imagination and daring.

BLACK BLOC

COMMUNIQUÉ

by ACME Collective A communiqué from one section of the black bloc of N30 in Seattle

On November 30, several groups of individuals in black bloc attacked various corporate targets in downtown Seattle. Among them were (to name just a few): Fidelity Investment, Bank America, US Bankcorp, Old Navy, GAP, NikeTown, Levi's, and Planet Hollywood.

This activity lasted for over 5 hours and involved the breaking of storefront windows and doors and defacing of facades.

The black bloc was a loosely organized cluster of affinity groups and individuals who roamed around downtown, pulled this way and that by a significant storefront and the sight of a police formation. Unlike the vast majority of activists who were pepper-sprayed, tear-gassed and shot at with rubber bullets on several occasions, most of our section of the black bloc escaped serious injury by remaining constantly in motion and avoiding engagement with the police. We buddied up, kept tight and watched each others' backs. Those attacked by federal thugs were un-arrested by quick-thinking and organized members of the black bloc. The sense of solidarity was awe-inspiring.

THE PEACE POLICE

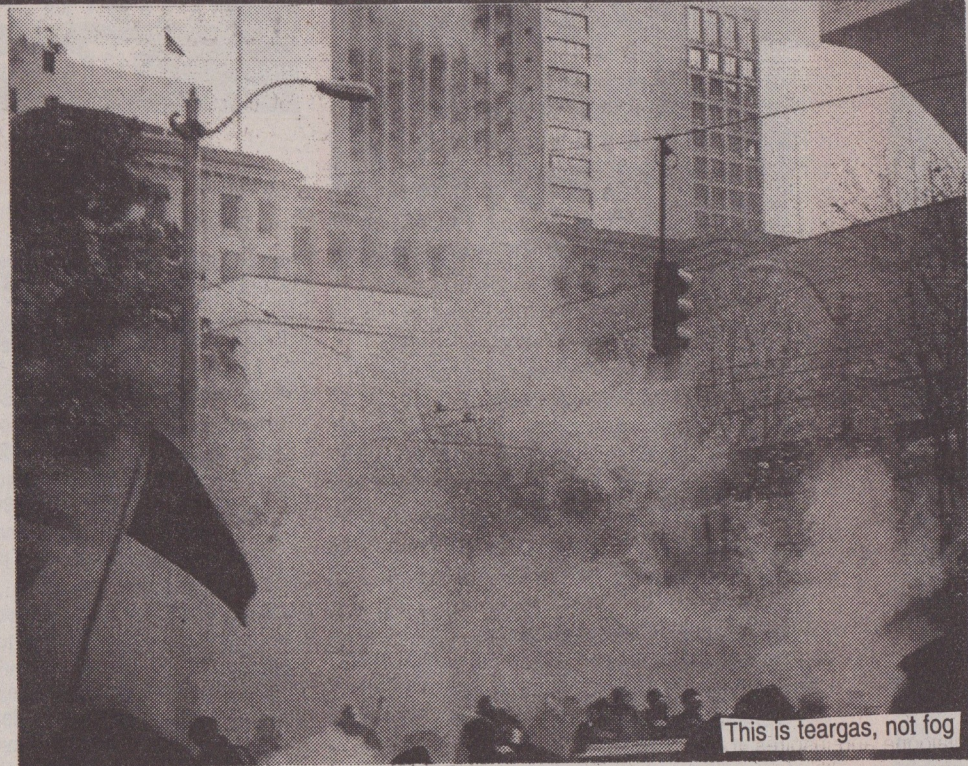
Unfortunately, the presence and persistence of "peace police" was quite disturbing. On at least 6 separate occasions, so-called "non-violent" activists physically attacked individuals who targeted corporate property. Some even went so far as to stand in front of the Niketown super store and tackle and shove the black bloc away. Indeed, such self-described "peace-keepers" posed a much

appreciate his writings and analyses, he is in no sense our leader, directly, indirectly, philosophically or otherwise.

3. "The mass public squat is the headquarters of the anarchists who destroyed property on November 30th." In reality, most of the people in the "Autonomous Zone" squat are residents of Seattle who have spent most of their time since its opening on the 28th in the squat. While they may know of one-another, the two groups are not co-extensive and in no case could the squat be considered the headquarters of people who destroyed property.

4. "They escalated situations on the 30th, leading to the tear-gassing of passive, non-violent protesters." To answer this, we need only note that tear-gassing, pepper-spraying and the shooting of rubber bullets all began before the black blocs (as far as we know) started engaging in property destruction. In addition, we must resist the tendency to establish a causal relationship between police repression and protest in any form, whether it involved property destruction or not. The police are charged with protecting the interests of the wealthy few and the blame for the violence cannot be placed upon those who protest those interests.

5. Conversely: "They acted in response to the police repression." While this might be a more positive representation of the black bloc, it is nevertheless false. We refuse to be misconstrued as a purely reactionary force. While the logic of the black bloc may not make sense to some, it is in any case a pro-active logic.



but it was tight. As for the charge of opportunism, it would be hard to imagine who of the thousands in attendance didn't take advantage of the opportunity created in Seattle to advance their agenda. The question becomes, then, whether or not we helped create that opportunity and most of us certainly did (which leads us to the next myth):

9. "They don't know the issues" or "they aren't activists who've been working on this." While we may not be professional activists

something that someone else needs or wants. In a society based on private property rights, those who are able to accrue more of what others need or want have greater power. By extension, they wield greater control over what others perceive as needs and desires, usually in the interest of increasing profit to themselves.

Advocates of "free trade" would like to see this process to its logical conclusion: a network of a few industry monopolists with ultimate

The black bloc was a loosely organized cluster of affinity groups and individuals who roamed around downtown, pulled this way and that by a significant storefront and the sight of a police formation. Unlike the vast majority of activists who were pepper-sprayed, tear-gassed and shot at with rubber bullets on several occasions, most of our section of the black bloc escaped serious injury by remaining constantly in motion and avoiding engagement with the police. We buddied up, kept tight and watched each others' backs. Those attacked by federal thugs were un-arrested by quick-thinking and organized members of the black bloc. The sense of solidarity was awe-inspiring.

THE PEACE POLICE

Unfortunately, the presence and persistence of "peace police" was quite disturbing. On at least 6 separate occasions, so-called "non-violent" activists physically attacked individuals who targeted corporate property. Some even went so far as to stand in front of the Niketown super store and tackle and shove the black bloc away. Indeed, such self-described "peace-keepers" posed a much greater threat to individuals in the black bloc than the notoriously violent uniformed "peace-keepers" sanctioned by the state (undercover officers have even used the cover of the activist peace-keepers to ambush those who engage in corporate property destruction).

TEN MYTHS ABOUT THE BLACK BLOC

Here's a little something to dispel the myths that have been circulating about the N30 black bloc:

1. "They are all a bunch of Eugene anarchists." While a few may be anarchists from Eugene, we hail from all over the United States, including Seattle. In any case, most of us are familiar with local issues in Seattle (for instance, the recent occupation of downtown by some of the most nefarious of multinational retailers).

2. "They are all followers of John Zerzan." A lot of rumors have been circulating that we are followers of John Zerzan, an anarcho-primitivist author from Eugene who advocates property destruction. While some of us may

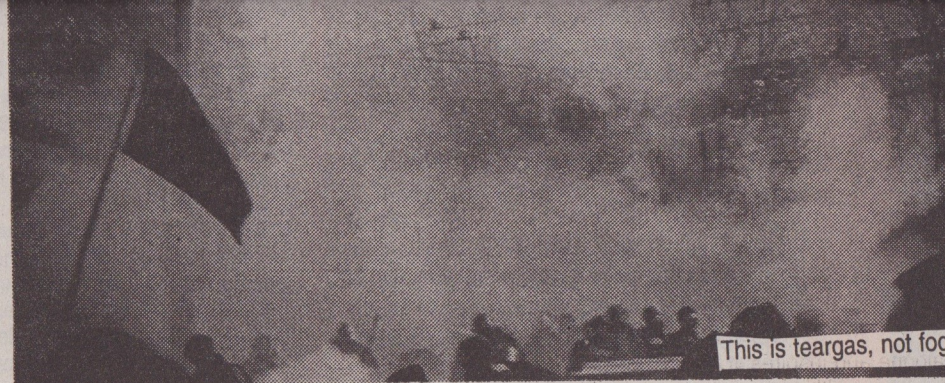
property. 4. "They escalated situations on the 30th, leading to the tear-gassing of passive, non-violent protesters." To answer this, we need only note that tear-gassing, pepper-spraying and the shooting of rubber bullets all began before the black blocs (as far as we know) started engaging in property destruction. In addition, we must resist the tendency to establish a causal relationship between police repression and protest in any form, whether it involved property destruction or not. The police are charged with protecting the interests of the wealthy few and the blame for the violence cannot be placed upon those who protest those interests.

5. Conversely: "They acted in response to the police repression." While this might be a more positive representation of the black bloc, it is nevertheless false. We refuse to be misconstrued as a purely reactionary force. While the logic of the black bloc may not make sense to some, it is in any case a pro-active logic.

6. "They are a bunch of angry adolescent boys." Aside from the fact that it belies a disturbing ageism and sexism, it is false. Property destruction is not merely macho rabble-rousing or testosterone-laden angst release. Nor is it displaced and reactionary anger. It is strategically and specifically targeted direct action against corporate interests.

7. "They just want to fight." This is pretty absurd, and it conveniently ignores the eagerness of "peace police" to fight us. Of all the groups engaging in direct action, the black bloc was perhaps the least interested in engaging the authorities and we certainly had no interest in fighting with other anti-WTO activists (despite some rather strong disagreements over tactics).

8. "They are a chaotic, disorganized and opportunistic mob." While many of us could surely spend days arguing over what "chaotic" means, we were certainly not disorganized. The organization may have been fluid and dynamic,



but it was tight. As for the charge of opportunism, it would be hard to imagine who of the thousands in attendance didn't take advantage of the opportunity created in Seattle to advance their agenda. The question becomes, then, whether or not we helped create that opportunity and most of us certainly did (which leads us to the next myth):

9. "They don't know the issues" or "they aren't activists who've been working on this." While we may not be professional activists, we've all been working on this convergence in Seattle for months. Some of us did work in our home-towns and others came to Seattle months in advance to work on it. To be sure, we were responsible for many hundreds of people who came out on the streets on the 30th, only a very small minority of which had anything to do with the black bloc. Most of us have been studying the effects of the global economy, genetic engineering, resource extraction, transportation, labor practices, elimination of indigenous autonomy, animal rights and human rights and we've been doing activism on these issues for many years. We are neither ill-informed nor unexperienced.

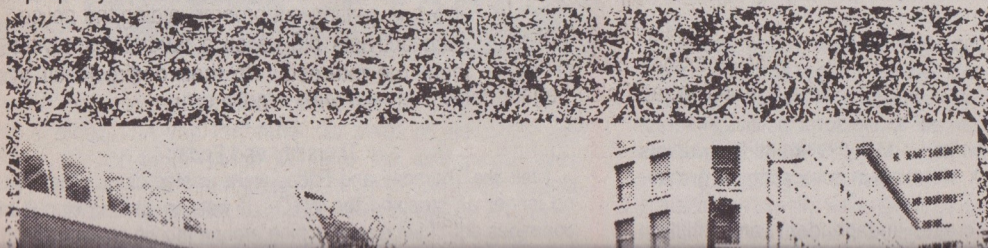
10. "Masked anarchists are anti-democratic and secretive because they hide their identities." Let's face it (with or without a mask)--we aren't living in a democracy right now. If this week has not made it plain enough, let us remind you--we are living in a police state. People tell us that if we really think that we're right, we wouldn't be hiding behind masks. "The truth will prevail" is the assertion. While this is a fine and noble goal, it does not jive with the present reality. Those who pose the greatest threat to the interests of Capital and State will be persecuted. Some pacifists would have us accept this persecution gleefully. Others would tell us that it is a worthy sacrifice. We are not so morose.

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Advocates of "free trade" would like to see this process to its logical conclusion: a network of a few industry monopolists with ultimate control over the lives of the everyone else. Advocates of "fair trade" would like to see this process mitigated by government regulations meant to superficially impose basic humanitarian standards. As anarchists, we despise both positions.

Private property--and capitalism, by extension--is intrinsically violent and repressive and cannot be reformed or mitigated. Whether the power of everyone is concentrated into the hands of a few corporate heads or diverted into a regulatory apparatus charged with mitigating the disasters of the latter, no one can be as free or as powerful as they could be in a non-hierarchical society.

When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights. At the same time, we exorcize that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us. By "destroying" private property, we convert its limited exchange value into an expanded use value. A storefront window becomes a vent to let some fresh air into the oppressive atmosphere of a retail outlet (at least until the police decide to tear-gas a nearby road blockade). A newspaper box becomes a tool for creating such vents or a small blockade for the reclamation of public space or an object to improve one's vantage point by standing on it.



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ON THE VIOLENCE OF PROPERTY

We contend that property destruction is not a violent activity unless it destroys lives or causes pain in the process. By this definition, private property--especially corporate private property--is itself infinitely more violent than any action taken against it.

Private property should be distinguished from personal property. The latter is based upon use while the former is based upon trade. The premise of personal property is that each of us has what s/he needs. The premise of private property is that each of us has

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After N30, many people will never see a shop window or a hammer the same way again. Broken windows can be boarded up (with yet more waste of our forests) and eventually replaced, but the shattering of assumptions will hopefully persist for some time to come.

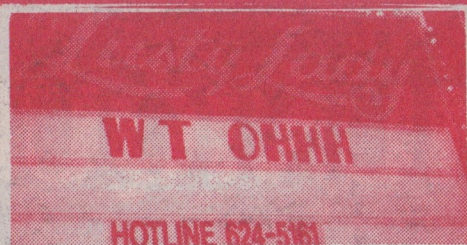
Against Capital and State,
the ACME Collective
"Peasant Revolt!"

Disclaimer: these observations and analyses represent only those of the ACME Collective and should not be construed to be representative of the rest of the black bloc on N30 or anyone else who engaged in riot or property destruction that day.

(This was edited for length. for the full text see www.indymedia.org (eds.))



A dumpster waiting to become a source of heat and light



Notebook from the Streets

Chants-overheard in Seattle: While circling outside the Seattle Jail and feeling a little powerless: "Let's get real, storm the Bastille!" After the window breaking became the talk of the town: "No Apologies, No Regrets, Long Live the Anarchist Threat!" At an intersection after the powerful, pumped up crowd got stopped for unexplained reasons for the umpteenth time by our "leaders": "The People, Stopped, will never be restarted!"

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Personal Accounts: Ba

No Mercy to the Nonviolent

by Adam Welch

History has been made. The mainstream press has said that the debate over global economic system will never be the same and that the alliance of movements is unprecedented. Using direct action and mobilizing tens of thousands of people on the streets, the World Trade Organization conference was completely disrupted. The WTO, representing the pinnacle of capitalism and the domination of our society by elite economic interests, suffered a deafening blow.

So, after this inspiring victory created by thousands of people organizing, what kinds of lessons can we learn?

Non-Violence and Police Repression

The organizing by the Direct Action Network was great. The affinity group structure, of 5-20 people performing actions together and coordinating through mass meeting of representatives was highly effective in organizing thousands of people in a decentralized manner.

The protests were so effective that within several hours the conference was shut down. We had been able to hold our occupations and blockades of the hotels and intersections by non-violently linking arms and using our numbers. Ultimately the police shifted tactics and began violently attacking the protests with tear gas, pepper spray, concussion grenades and rubber bullets.

I was extremely disappointed by the reactions of some protesters. They demanded that everyone sit down and chant - that this would stop the police; the police only continued their attacks without mercy. They argued against erecting barricades to protect ourselves - that this was "property destruction"; this caused more people to be brutalized and the crowd was easily dispersed by gassing and grenades. No amount of chanting "non-violence" would make the police listen and no peace sign would deflect any rubber bullets.

This is the difference between tactical non-violence and ideological non-violence. Letting people be hurt is itself violent and furthermore defeating to our movement. Instead we need to be prepared so that when the police use violence against us, we can



Rubber bullets fired at the butterflies

When the media's gassed too

By Mahtin

None of us quite knew what to expect Tuesday, "N30," the big day. There were to be several marches during the course of the morning, including one of students and another of labor. Through the Direct Action Network, many people prepared themselves by attending trainings on nonviolence, on doing jail and legal support, and on other organizing topics during the days leading up to Tuesday. Affinity groups had made plans for actions they wanted to do during the day. Through the Independent Media Center, many groups were matched up with videographers and other media.

I went to a rally and march that began at 7 a.m. that day. I was paired up with a videographer friend of mine to serve as protection or a witness to any violence directed toward a group I was associated with, but we were separated after only one block of the march. I had seen the cops line up at one lockdown site with their

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This is the difference between tactical non-violence and ideological non-violence. Letting people be hurt is itself violent and furthermore defeating to our movement. Instead we need to be prepared, so that when the police use violence against us, we can respond with a reasonable amount of self-defense. During the confrontations, when people threw tear gas canisters back at the police, the gassing stopped. When they erected barricades from dumpsters and newsboxes, the police stopped advancing.

The Black Bloc

During the demonstrations on November 30th, the actions of the members of the Black Bloc were very controversial. But it is important to argue for a diversity of tactics and viewpoints rather than say everyone should only attack corporate symbols or everyone should only sit-down and let the cops kick their ass.

These actions created a great symbol, put the Anarchists into the spotlight, and are making the elites very nervous. But, sensational actions like these draw attention to the most radical parts of the anarchist movement rather than the long-term, mass organizing that goes unacknowledged.

The black bloc wasn't only about property destruction. I saw them earlier in the day blockading the hotel and they were impressive. Where ever they were needed, they went. They held their line against the police, when others were pushed and intimidated.

Seattle Everywhere - Building a Movement

To make our movement grow we need to educate in order to raise consciousness and spread our idea of a free society through all means possible. We need to show that Anarchist principles of organizing from the bottom-up and using direct action are the most practical and effective. The alliance of different movements needs to strengthen and grow.

Organizing in the schools is important because young people are catalysts for social change and full of energy and new ideas. Organizing with workers is equally important. Most existing unions are top-down bureaucracies married to electoral political interest and will never truly fight for workers.. Many rank-and-file workers

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What a Gas!

I can clearly remember the first time I experienced teargas. I didn't get away fast enough, and the sensation that came over me made me think I was going to die. The scratchy feeling in my throat and eyes soon became an unbearable burning, and I began to cough and lose my breath. I tried to take infrequent, deep breaths, but apparently I should have done the opposite. Eventually, I had to stop trying to run away from the gas, and someone helped me rinse my eyes and face. I was somewhat prepared for this experience. Imagine how an innocent bystander, a person trying to get home from work, must have felt! Some people were throwing teargas canisters back at the police. I hear that when the cops could see who threw tear gas at them, they would shoot rubber bullets at that person.

We noticed that as the day went on, the cops seemed to be using a stronger and stronger mixture of gas. Apparently the police were under orders to clear the entire downtown area in the middle of rush hour. They started gassing and using concussion grenades at every intersection we saw. It didn't matter who was there. You would walk (or stagger) through the gas clouds from one block to another, and find that the cops and gas were already there, too. Although the cops did not make many arrests on Tuesday, one of my friends reports that he saw a "snatch-squad" in action--he saw an unmarked car pull up beside someone who was just walking down the sidewalk, grab the person, and pull them into the car.

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Sunday's action was the culmination of a weekend of protest at the Ft. Benning military camp which drew more than 12,000 from around the country. Of those who braved the line, 65 were arrested and 23 who crossed the line in previous years will face prosecution for trespassing on federal property. The majority of the line crossers were seized and taken in buses to a public park approximately two miles away from the base.

The message seems clear. Seattle's direct action was peaceful but militant in its effective shutdown of downtown Seattle. The media will no longer cover, and the public no longer responds to, "polite" civil disobedience without disruption of business as usual.

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Organizing in the schools is important because young people are catalysts for social change and full of energy and new ideas. Organizing with workers is equally important. Most existing unions are top-down bureaucracies married to electoral political interest and will never truly fight for workers. Many rank-and-file workers realize this and we need to work with them in advocating for greater militancy and democracy.

Ultimately, we need to create independent and militant organizations and unions based on rank-and-file initiative and direct action. We should fight for better conditions and worker control, for the rights of the unemployed and immigrants, and against discrimination in all forms. Working together to organize and educate we can show a viable alternative to the present system and to both endless reformism and the authoritarian politics of political parties. Let the events of Seattle be a catalyst of it all.



Running from the gas

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I felt like Thursday and Friday were wasted days. The focus was no longer on stopping the WTO. It was on getting our ill-treated comrades out of jail and marching around the no-protest zone. This was very frustrating.

On Thursday, we met up on Broadway, for a spirited and police-escorted march down to the Park near the Pike Place Market. From there, we went to the jail and made a human circle around it. It wasn't clear what, if anything was going to happen at this rally. One positive thing about the march to Broadway that followed was that we saw more youth of color involved. We later saw the group march back and forth down Broadway. Broadway is nice for parades, like the one we had on Sunday, with theater and music at each intersection, but for a march against police brutality, well...it's senseless. It's just a place to let people vent their energy at nothing.

...

The police used a variety of tactics that hurt both demonstrators and passers-by and will have lasting effects. A Seattle woman had a miscarriage as a result of an encounter with the police. I have heard reports of people in restaurants vomiting while gassing was going on outside. -I saw several arrestees with dislocated shoulders. Doctors who were in Seattle have reported that people they have treated have exhibited signs of exposure to neurotoxins, which the police have denied using.

attle of Seattle

Caught at the WTO

by T. Wingnut

On Wednesday I headed to the no protest zone. People said I would be arrested on sight since the police had already swept up 200 protesters. There were police and National Guards in riot gear on every corner, and blocking many streets. I found 200 protesters in a drizzly intersection. We began to march, and the police blocked our access to the convention center, but let us march around. We met another contingent of 300 and marched until it was time for the labor rally at the docks. Many of us got impatient and about 1,000 began to march downtown.

As we approached the "No Protest" zone, police blocked our path, then tossed teargas grenades into the crowd. We retreated, and the police opened fire with rubber bullets. An armored car came down a side street and I tried to block it. They blasted me in the face with a fire-extinguisher-sized container of pepper spray. I stumbled down the street, led by some of my friends who grabbed me. I was blinded for the next 10 minutes.

We decided to march north, the only direction open to us. As we crossed under a freeway, police attacked from the side and teargassed, but the wind blew it back at them. I was at the rear, and as I turned away, I was hit in the back with a rubber pellet shotgun. We managed to get to 1st street, but the police were closing in. They teargassed us, along with many bystanders and motorists. We were now the captives of the police. Soon, city buses came, and they cuffed us one by one, dragging us on to the bus.

We were taken to Sand Point, where we sat for three hours, with no food, water, or bathroom facilities.

The police finally got to our bus, and told us they would physically remove us if we didn't leave when commanded. Given that choice, we took over the bus. At 3 a.m., they dragged us off the bus. We were given jail uniforms and wrist bands that said "John WTO," since we refused to give our names.

We spent hours in holding cells, with only turkey baloney sandwiches. On Friday night, some of us were taken to court in Seattle. We were finally taken in to see the judge, and she decided to dismiss our charges, but gave the prosecutor two years to refile charges against us, since we didn't give our names.

The police told us to get our stuff and leave, but half of us returned and stayed in solidarity with the other WTO prisoners. Finally at midnight, we got to see our lawyers for the first time and we decided to use solidarity to clog the court system. We were



How to shut down the WTO with one eye open

by M. Wingnut

Working as the point man for the East Bay wingnut affinity cluster, I arrived in Seattle 10 days early to scope out troublemaking opportunities. I got off the plane, headed downtown, and made my way to 420 E Denny Way, home to the direct action network, home to thousands of dedicated activists, home to sprawling tactical maps and lockbox manufacturing stations, the base of what was surely a massively pre-planned action. Theoretically, at least. The scene that greeted me was distinctly different. There was a big room. And, perhaps, there was a big map or two. A few people standing around looked like they knew how to make lockboxes. But signs of a massively pre-planned action? Nope, none of that was to be found.

There were big obstacles to planning the N30 action. Lots of affinity groups were working together. Most had never met before. A good chunk of us were really secretive and didn't want to share our plans with anyone else. Hardly anyone knew their way around Seattle. Hell, most of us barely knew where the targeted area was. Yet, somehow, come November 30th, we controlled downtown Seattle.

This happened because of a few distinct reasons. First off, locals had been setting up infrastructures for the event months in advance. We didn't know what was going to happen, but the structure was fairly evident. The city would be divided into thirteen pieces, each one the responsibility of a different affinity cluster. High powered UHF radios would link the different clusters, and low

N30 International Reports

Manila, Bacolod and Iloilo Philippines Some 8,000 people protested in front of the U.S. Embassy chanting anti-WTO slogans. Thousands also protested against the 1995 Mining Act which allows 100 percent foreign equity in local projects but has been challenged by tribespeople who say natural resources are their heritage and should not be exploited by overseas companies.

Euston Station U.K. A rally of nearly 2,000 gathered at Euston station to highlight the links between free trade and privatization of transportation. The rally later turned into a more militant protest when about 500 people tried to block a main traffic artery. An unmarked police van was set on fire.

Halifax U.K. A Nestlé factory was occupied and a banner was displayed outside. 16 were arrested.

Leeds, U.K. In the Leeds city center, around 50 protestors were faced by over 300 cops. In the face of these great odds, people stuck around handing out leaflets outside scummy companies.

Manchester, U.K. Lloyds Bank was occupied by 50 activists who then proceeded to block the street outside.



the face with a fire-extinguisher-sized can of pepper spray. I stumbled down the street, led by some of my friends who grabbed me. I was blinded for the next 10 minutes.

We decided to march north, the only direction open to us. As we crossed under a freeway, police attacked from the side and teargassed, but the wind blew it back at them. I was at the rear, and as I turned away, I was hit in the back with a rubber pellet shotgun. We managed to get to 1st street, but the police were closing in. They teargassed us, along with many bystanders and motorists. We were now the captives of the police. Soon, city buses came, and they cuffed us one by one, dragging us on to the bus.

We were taken to Sand Point, where we sat for three hours, with no food, water, or bathroom facilities.

The police finally got to our bus, and told us they would physically remove us if we didn't leave when commanded. Given that choice, we took over the bus. At 3 a.m., they dragged us off the bus. We were given jail uniforms and wrist bands that said "John WTO," since we refused to give our names.

We spent hours in holding cells, with only turkey baloney sandwiches. On Friday night, some of us were taken to court in Seattle. We were finally taken in to see the judge, and she decided to dismiss our charges, but gave the prosecutor two years to refile charges against us, since we didn't give our names.

The police told us to get our stuff and leave, but half of us returned and stayed in solidarity with the other WTO prisoners. Finally at midnight, we got to see our lawyers for the first time and we decided to use solidarity to clog the court system. We were released at 2 a.m. on Sunday, and all the others over the next 24 hours (except the dozen or so felons).



Squat Seattle

By the pollinators

The first major anti-WTO action created a HOME out of a vacant building. During the week hundreds of protesters and homeless folk worked together to make the autonomous zone breathe fire into the steel and glass leviathan of corporate Seattle. It's the 5th day of occupation. 5 squatters are huddled by a window.

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This happened because of a few distinct reasons. First off, locals had been setting up infrastructures for the event months in advance. We didn't know what was going to happen, but the structure was fairly evident. The city would be divided into thirteen pieces, each one the responsibility of a different affinity cluster. High powered UHF radios would link the different clusters, and low powered walkie talkies would allow the affinity groups to communicate across shorter distances.

The morning started out well. Flags and banners were distributed, contingents were formed, people started marching out. At this point the high tech, super organized radio traffic consisted mostly of updates on how big the crowd was.

The East Bay wingnuts, organized as our own flying squad, split off from the march to assist an emerging blockade fairly early in the procession. That was when the organization began to fall apart. No one was using the correct radio channels.

Soon, however, all issues over channel usage became moot, as all of our radios were jammed. One channel featured a loop tape of a cursing man. Another channel had somebody reading full names of the organizers out over it. We turned our radios off and took to wandering the streets, which at this point, worked as well as any other tactic would have. The streets were packed with people, it was easy enough to find hot spots. By around three o'clock communications somehow resumed, just in time for us to deal with what was becoming an increasingly brutal police situation.

Police had begun pepper and tear gassing people, and the crowds had thinned to the point that some sort of coordination was needed. "More lockboxes needed on 4th and Union," went one call, "puppets to University," went another. One intersection was asking for lockdown volunteers, while another was calling for media.

Every now and then I would run into the other two tactical folks in my immediate area and we would try to develop a plan. Of course, a coherent plan never emerged. We were all very tired, chunks of our affinity groups had disappeared, and we were scared of being tagged as organizers and going to jail on conspiracy charges.

In the end our preparations helped. We shut down the city, scared the police, impressed the media. And we learned something about planning for these events. The main lesson-detailed tactical plans don't really work for large crowds in unpredictable situations. Tightly organized affinity groups do work. Radios are fun to use, but don't really help too much. The most important lesson I learned?

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France 75,000 people in 80 different cities in France protest the dictatorship of the WTO. On Nov. 25, 5000 French farmers with their sheep, ducks, and goats, feasted on regional products under the Eiffel tower in protest of the impact of trade liberalization. 800 miners clashed with cops ransacking a tax office.

Geneva, Switzerland 27 people aided by many outside who were blocking traffic, occupied WTO headquarters. One group, posing as "visitors" occupied the stairs leading to Michael Moore's office with a banner reading "No Commerce, No Organization: Self Management".

Greece Protestors clashed with riot police throughout the day and night at demonstrations outside the US embassy. The protests were about a wide variety of issues including world trade.

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"The fucking media's scapegopating this squat for all the shit that went on downtown. They think we're the headquarters of the entire Black Bloc, that we're coordinating the entire resistance out of this building. They could move on this place like they did MOVE and no one would blink an eye," says Tom.

Spyda agrees. "The media's been setting us up for the last three days so when we go down they can say we were violent riffraff all along. They've been given hours of lucid, articulate quotes about housing and social fucking justice and all they can talk about is anarchists from Eugene..."

...the first day of the occupation. It was evident that those involved understood the seriousness of the takeover. Within two hours the activists had installed a sink and a toilet, cooked hot meals for 90, reinforced barricades, conducted interview with mainstream and independent media, and organized security and radio communications teams...

...Everyone in the building worked hard to meet the ultimate goals of the building's liberation: **providing housing for the homeless!** This objective directly bonded to criticisms of the WTO as a global machine fueled by the blood of the working class and the rape of natural resources for capital and consumerist growth...

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X-tra large pepper spray cans

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New Dehli, India A group, including writer Arundhati Roy, went to the U.S. embassy to deliver more than 11,000 postcards protesting a dam in Maheshwar. They were arrested and held for 2 hours because of a regulation saying 10 people were too many to enter the embassy.

Elsewhere Other protests on November 30 against the WTO, the US and global capitalism were conducted in: Iceland, Prague, Limerick, Ireland, Rome, Berlin, Amsterdam, New York, Padua, Italy, Cardiff, Wales, Bangor, Wales, Totnes, UK, and San Francisco.

WILL TEARGAS OPPONENTS BATTLE OF SEATTLE

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intersections and points of entry to the Convention Center had already been blocked by autonomous groups of non-violent protesters who employed any number of tactics to tie up space, snarl traffic, and seal off all points of entry for WTO delegates. Many delegates would spend the next few hours trying desperately to find a passage in. Demonstrators used lock-boxes, human chains, and sometimes pieces of chain-link fencing borrowed from nearby construction sites to block their path and insure that the meeting would not go on as planned. It worked.

An elaborate and effective radio communication system between various clusters and locations proved invaluable for passing information between clusters and for deploying auxiliary groups of protesters to troublespots as they arose. Radio communication became increasingly difficult throughout the day, however, as police--and possibly right-wingers--began jamming the protester's frequencies.

Shut 'Em Down

Understaffed, inexperienced, and lacking political will from a city administration fearful of coming down too hard on protesters, the

streets were then shut down by protesters who erected impromptu blockades using relocated dumpsters, trashcans, and newspaper boxes. Traffic was gridlocked. Masked-up bands of roving anarchists were able to break many corporate and bank windows at this point, and quite a bit of political graffiti began to appear.

A *de facto* street party formed in the downtown shopping core bordering the convention center, and people more or less did what they wanted. The streets were ours. A sound system appeared in one intersection and people began dancing. Locals, especially youth, immediately joined the revelry and before long you got the impression that there was little to distinguish 'the people' from 'the protesters'. Lines became blurred.

Lines were not blurred, however, at the blockades, where protesters faced off with police who started beefing up and militarizing their lines. They would periodically make incursions into an occupied intersection to allow delegates in, to break up a blockade, or to push back groups of protesters.

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Frustrated by the effectiveness of the blockades and not knowing how to deal with the growing numbers of people on the outside of their lines, the police early on resorted to tear gas and "crowd-control" munitions. From there, things escalated quickly.

Whose city?

By afternoon, tense standoffs were entrenched at numerous intersections and the focus of the day shifted from blockades of the WTO meeting to confrontations with the police. The police, now with full body riot gear and ominous black armored personnel carriers, by mid-day began to penetrate a wedge into the several block area of the perimeter which contained the largest mass of demonstrators numbering by this time in the thousands.

Capitol Hill area, prompting young area residents to come out of their houses in support of the protests. The focus shifted again later that evening to angry residents demanding that the heavy-handed police leave their neighborhood.

Ultimately, the gassing strategy failed for the police. While it did succeed in clearing the streets, residents, shoppers, and workers got gassed right along with the protesters, making the disturbances much bigger than they had initially been and setting a good number of Seattle locals against the police. The biggest costs to the city, it turns out, were not as a result of the much media-hyped vandalism to downtown storefronts, nor even all the police overtime. The biggest costs by far were the lost revenue to downtown businesses caused by the absence of shoppers on the street during one of the busiest shopping weeks of the year, a situation brought on primarily by the police's over-reaction.

Day Two

By day two the city had called a state of emergency under pressure from federal

the unions was unable or unwilling to lead the movement against the WTO. The demonstrations had been too hot and too effective and the bureaucrats and beneficiaries of groups across the board cowered in the face of further confrontation with power. With the exception of the dock worker's shutdown of the west coast ports on Tuesday, the other unions never actually led any direct action against the WTO in the first place, calling into question the basis of DAN's coalition with organized labor. DAN itself, after Tuesday, limited itself to only defensive actions, such as marching to the jail to demand the release of prisoners.

DAN and the unions did lead on subsequent days, but they led down a dead end, away from confrontation with the WTO, and to boring liberal rallies outside of the city center complete with reformist speakers and recuperationist politicians. They lead us back into the system. The more moderate groups who had come to Seattle such as the AFL-CIO and Global Exchange even went so far as to make amends for and denounce the more militant actions of Fat Tuesday. Leaders of all stripes, left to right, were united by a desire to see things brought back under control.

Stolen Power

A historical rupture took place in Seattle. A paradigm shifted and a level of consciousness was broken through that all the people who were there experienced.

The system was overwhelmed. A revolutionary situation emerged, meaning all the normal checks and balances of the system had failed momentarily. It broke down under the weight of a critical mass of opposition that crystallized and could not be contained through the proper channels. Normalcy disappeared, the social glue that holds society together had gone away, nothing was for sure and everything was possible.

The people took their power. A good number of the protesters hadn't come to Seattle to ask the WTO to change; they came to shut it down. The demonstrations changed the WTO, and the political landscape around it, by force. People took power from the bottom up and the authorities were powerless to do anything but hand it over. The spin doctors in

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Shut 'Em Down

Understaffed, inexperienced, and lacking political will from a city administration fearful of coming down too hard on protesters, the police were very ineffective. Having concentrated nearly all their forces on trying to defend the convention center and the WTO meeting inside, the surrounding streets, with few officers on hand, quickly became the domain of the protesters.

Around the blockades and on surrounding blocks the number of demonstrators swelled as more and more people arrived. In addition to the area already closed by police, more

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We Win !

realism about what is possible in the struggle against the trading arrangements now operative in the WTO.

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This incursion was a block by block push down Union St., one of the prominent streets of the downtown shopping district, now held by the protesters. By exploding concussion grenades designed to scare people, then shooting tear-gas canisters and sometimes rubber or wooden bullets, they moved slowly down the street, driving people off of one block, then holding the line. But this strategy proved too little too late, and by nightfall the authorities were forced to declare a state of emergency. They proceeded to gas the entire downtown area, sending thousands of people running in all directions to escape the tear gas. Martial law was declared, and that evening Big Bill Clinton rolled into town.

But the people would not back down. Despite the gassings and rubber bullets, crowds would continue to gather and regather in order to continue protesting. This went on into the night, with the police eventually pushing the demonstration up the hill into the

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Day Two

By day two the city had called a state of emergency under pressure from federal

authorities, and the greater downtown area--about one square mile--was declared a "no protest zone." But by 7 a.m., hundreds of people had already entered the forbidden zone to protest. No sooner than they had arrived, they were descended upon by Seattle's finest, surrounded, and arrested. Their crime: protesting while under martial law. Police targeted organizers and people with radio communications. From that point on, many of DAN's key players were in jail and the communications system was wiped out.

From the outskirts of the mass arrest site a larger crowd gathered. It and other groups formed sporadically throughout the day, including one that broke off from a steelworker's march, braving the foreboding streets of the no protest zone, often eliciting tear gas rounds from the occupation forces. But there was a defiant spirit in the streets among the people as the sizable crowds demonstrated neither fear of the police, nor any inclination of desire to see their right to protest stripped away.

On day two it seemed that nobody was in charge. The city could not control the demonstrations. The "leadership" of DAN, dominated by middle-class pacifists as it was, seemed increasingly cut off from the people in the streets. In fact, DAN's willingness to confront the WTO or police now seemed tempered by the previous day's "violence." The people themselves, those who continued to go out of their homes and safe refuges, took the lead. They were now the forefront of the movement, and they were basically on their own.

Sell-Out

After Tuesday, the leadership of DAN and

into the system. The more moderate groups who had come to Seattle such as the AFL-CIO and Global Exchange even went so far as to make amends for and denounce the more militant actions of Fat Tuesday. Leaders of all stripes, left to right, were united by a desire to see things brought back under control.

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The people took their power. A good number of the protesters hadn't come to Seattle to ask the WTO to change; they came to shut it down. The demonstrations changed the WTO, and the political landscape around it, by force. People took power from the bottom up and the authorities were powerless to do anything but hand it over. The spin doctors in the corporate media couldn't work fast enough to keep up with the shift in consciousness that the rift in society, however brief, allowed. The insight into the workings of the system, the exposure of the lies that are everyday reality, the struggle of righteous truth against condemnable tyranny proved impossible to ignore.

The real emergency wasn't the small amount of vandalism that occurred, and the violence was mostly administered by the police. The state of emergency that occurred was that people were taking power into their own hands. The emergency was a crisis of legitimacy for the authorities who accustomed to ordinarily being the ones in power in society and calling the shots, all of a sudden found themselves being stripped of that role of no free will of their own and in a manner over which they had no say. That was the state of emergency in Seattle. That's why it was brought under martial law.

But how many of these unions are truly ready to break ranks and holler "Death to the WTO"? For that matter, how many of them

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realism about what is possible in the struggle against the trading arrangements now operative in the WTO.

Take organized labor, as embodied in the high command of the AFL-CIO. Are these people truly committed to the destruction of the WTO? Of course they aren't. It was back in February of this year that the message came down from AFL-CIO HQ that rallying in Seattle was fine, but the plan was not to shut down the WTO. Labor's plan was to work from the inside. As far as any street action was concerned, the deals were cut long ago. Labor might huff and labor might puff, but when it comes to the WTO, what labor wanted, in James Hoffa's phrase, was a seat at the table.

And what would this seat at the table turn out to have been? At Seattle, those labor chieftans were willing to settle for a truly threadbare bit of window dressing, in the shape of a working group which would, in the next round of WTO talks, be sensitive to labor's concerns. Here's the chronology. The present trade round would have pondered the working group's mission and composition and made recommendations for the next round of trade talks. Then, when the next round got under way, the working group would perhaps take form. Guess what? It's at least 2014 AD before the working group is up and running.

There are unions--the autoworkers, steelworkers, teamsters, machinists, UNITE--which have rank and file members passionately concerned about "free trade" when, as in the case of teamsters, it means Mexican truck drivers coming over the border at \$2 an hour.

by the protesters. By exploding crowds with grenades designed to scare people, then shooting tear-gas canisters and sometimes rubber or wooden bullets, they moved slowly down the street, driving people off of one block, then holding the line. But this strategy proved too little too late, and by nightfall the authorities were forced to declare a state of emergency. They proceeded to gas the entire downtown area, sending thousands of people running in all directions to escape the tear gas. Martial law was declared, and that evening Big Bill Clinton rolled into town.

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But how many of these unions are truly ready to break ranks and holler "Death to the WTO"? For that matter, how many of them are prepared to think in world terms, as the capitalists do? Take the steelworkers, the only labor group which, in the form of the Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and the Environment, took up positions in downtown that Tuesday morning (and later fought with the cops and endured teargas themselves). But on that same day, November 30, the Moscow Tribune ran a story reporting that the Clinton administration has effectively stopped all cold-rolled steel imports from Russia by imposing penalty duties of 178 per cent. Going into winter those Russian working families at Severstal, Novolipetsk, and Magnitogorsk are facing tougher times than ever. The Moscow Tribune's reporter, John Helmer, wasn't in doubt why: "Gore must try to preserve steel company and steel worker support."

As the preceding item suggests, there's no such thing as "free trade." The present argument is not about trade, for which (except for maybe a few bioregionalists in Ecotopia) all are in favor in some measure. The argument is about how trade is to be controlled, how wealth is to be made and distributed. The function of the WTO is to express in trade rules the present balance of

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economic power on the world held by the big corporations, which see the present WTO round as an opportunity to lock in their gains, to enlist its formal backing in their ceaseless quest for cheap labor and places to dump their poisons.

So ours is a worldwide guerrilla war, of publicity, harassment, obstructionism. It's nothing simple, like the "Stop the War" slogan of the 1960s. Capitalism could stop that war and move on. American capitalism can't stop trade and survive on any terms it cares for.

We truly don't want a seat at the table to "reform" trade rules, because if we get one, then sooner or later we'll be standing alongside Global Exchange's Medea Benjamin proclaiming that Nike, which pays its workers less than 20

first place. The day the WTO stipulates the phase-in of a world minimum wage of \$3 an hour is the day the corporations destroy it and move on. Publicity, harassment, obstructionism... Think always in terms of international solidarity. Find targets of opportunity. South Africa forces domestic licensing at cheaper rates of AIDS drugs. Solidarity. The Europeans don't want bioengineered crops. Fight on that front. Challenge the system at the level of its pretensions. Make demands in favor of real free trade. Get rid of copyright and patent restrictions and fees imposed on developing nations.

A guerrilla war, without illusions or respectable ambitions. Justice in world trade

...these were shining hours, achieved entirely outside the conventional arena of orderly protest and... the timid bleats of the profesional leadership....

cents an hour, has made "an astounding transformation," and in Seattle actually defending Nike's premises from well-merited attack by the street warriors. Capitalism only plays by the rules if it wrote those rules in the

is by definition a revolutionary and utopian aim. This article was lifted from the Anderson Valley Advertiser without permission. They're cool; drop them a line: 12451 Anderson Valley Way, Boonville, CA 95415.

The ABCs of the WTO

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favorable to "growth," and the centralization of wealth and power into a few, massive transnational corporations. "Free" trade generally means freedom for huge corporations to produce and sell products without regard for the welfare of people or the environment. Under free trade, transnational corporations are free to find the cheapest labor available, and then move their factories to that area to exploit the cheap labor.

Labor is cheap in these countries because workers lack the freedom to organize independent unions and government structures are undemocratic and unresponsive to worker safety or environmental health. Labor is also cheap because hundreds of millions of people who formerly lived off subsistence agriculture have been forced into the employment market.

The IMF and World Bank have forced poor nations around the world to raise quick cash to make debt payments by exporting raw materials and agricultural products. Cattle ranching, clearcutting and plantations have replaced farming for local use. Free trade advocates often argue that the poor masses in the third world *want* jobs at Nike, but only in the sense that workers everywhere, when stripped of any other way to get food, are forced to become wage slaves. There is no free choice between maintaining traditional, subsistence agriculture and becoming part of the world economy.

The alleged goal of the globalization process is to foster "development" in the third world and economic growth in the developed nations. However, it is far from clear that either development or economic growth actually benefit the population of the world, although both are essential to keeping profits up for transnational corporations.

Market-based capitalism *requires* that the economy grow every year. Any company that doesn't grow is deserted by its stockholders

trade policies weaken each nation's ability to put any limits on transnational corporations, economic growth, or ecological destruction. Any local, state or national body that tries to impose standards can easily be abandoned by corporations, which can withdraw investment and jobs, but which will still be permitted to sell products—limiting opportunities for local production and autonomy. This is the essential coercive force of "free" trade.

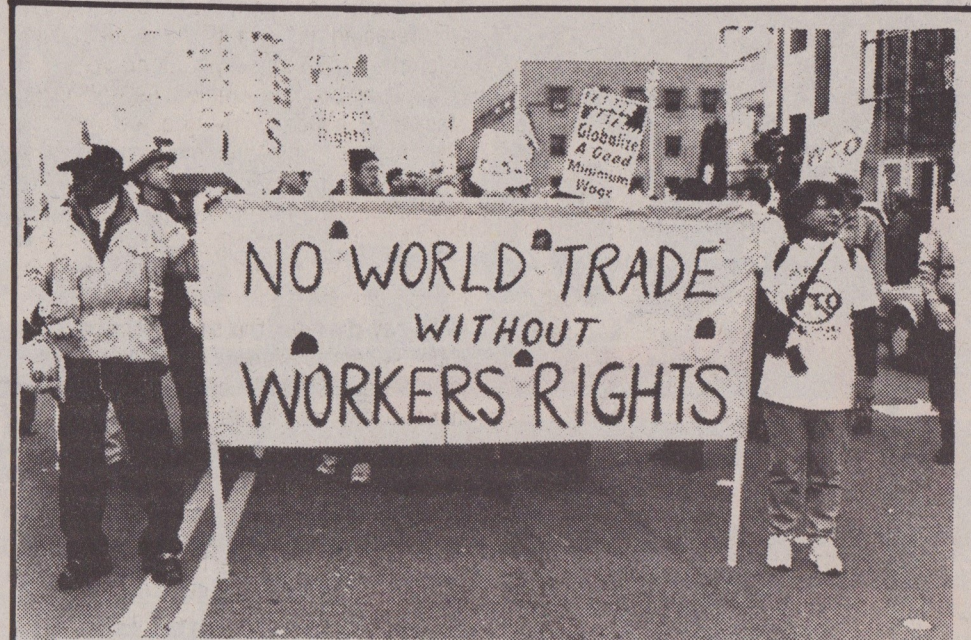
What Is To Be Done

Given the powerful forces at work, and the complex web of problems with current economic, development and trade policies, it is extremely encouraging that the Battle of Seattle has finally spurred discussion within the US of economic issues in general, and the WTO in particular.

It is, however, far from clear how to harness the energy, courage and creativity displayed on the streets in Seattle. Corporate domination is all around us in every country, yet it is difficult to know how to effectively strike out against it. However consider the following:

- **International Alliances.** The most important aspect of Seattle is the possibility it suggests for an international labor/environmental/citizen coalition against corporate dominance, the dominance of growth over nature and the supremacy of profits over the lives of people. It was amazing to see thousands of people from all walks of life together in the streets in Seattle, bravely standing up to the WTO and its police.

Labor leaders mobilized massive numbers of their constituency to participate in the protest. Despite the fact that they started backpedaling even before November 30, realizing that their own rank and file were getting beyond the reformism of the Democratic Party, sell-out unions, the labor march "monitors" couldn't stop thousands of steelworkers, teamsters, longshoremen, and other workers from getting a radical



Workers, activists unite despite mainstream union capitulation

By Adam Zeltzer

In the biggest global victory for workers in decades, thirty thousand unionists and tens of thousands of students, environmentalists, and human rights activists stopped the WTO in its tracks and sent its 133 trade ministers home in utter defeat. The Battle of Seattle has made it almost impossible for the WTO to take major new steps in the next few years to further drive down wages, working conditions, and environmental standards throughout the world. Before the week of protests, most workers in the US and abroad had never even heard of the WTO, but now the capitalist governments that run it and their thieving corporate masters can no longer work quietly in the dark to undermine workers and farmers everywhere. Seattle may well be the first step for working people, a turning of the tide.

This was the first major political protest by workers in decades. Major unions such as

protest of most activists. But the rank and filers had other ideas.

While police were using gas on the demonstrators, unionists left their stadium and headed downtown. The march marshals sought to prevent the unionists from reaching the protesters. They physically blocked two intersections and sought to divert the marchers towards another hotel, where they said a sit-in would take place. They were primarily interested in preventing the linking up of the thousands of youth with the unionists in battle against the police and the WTO.

Many workers marched right past the marshals. The ILWU and other unionists went downtown to join the youth who were protesting. In one instance, police were chasing some youth and saw a delegation of longshoremen. The police quickly retreated. The steelworkers had brought hundreds of striking workers from Oregon Steel and Kaiser Aluminum to Seattle for the protest.

have been forced into the employment market. The IMF and World Bank have forced poor nations around the world to raise quick cash to make debt payments by exporting raw materials and agricultural products. Cattle ranching, clearcutting and plantations have replaced farming for local use. Free trade advocates often argue that the poor masses in the third world *want* jobs at Nike, but only in the sense that workers everywhere, when stripped of any other way to get food, are forced to become wage slaves. There is no free choice between maintaining traditional, subsistence agriculture and becoming part of the world economy.

The alleged goal of the globalization process is to foster "development" in the third world and economic growth in the developed nations. However, it is far from clear that either development or economic growth actually benefit the population of the world, although both are essential to keeping profits up for transnational corporations.

Market-based capitalism *requires* that the economy grow every year. Any company that doesn't grow is deserted by its stockholders (who seek short-term returns on their investments), bought up by its competitors, or forced out of business. Constant competition enforces the rule: grow or die. This process operates regardless of whether this growth benefits or hurts *human beings* or the environment.

For example, in "developed" countries, the use of oil and cars expands every year—an indicator of economic growth. But does this make life better? More time spent in traffic, more noise, more pollution. More people moving from place to place, to be sure, but does it help people live more fulfilling lives?

Continued growth means that people in developed countries have more and more stuff and services every year. Western culture assumes that no one ever has "enough," and the media ensures that we never stop buying.

Continued growth is also not sustainable. The amount of resources consumed and the amount of waste produced by "developed" economies has already exceeded the ability of the earth to regenerate the resources and absorb the waste. Witness global climate change, ozone depletion, deforestation, topsoil loss, toxic waterways, depleted fishstocks, and mass extinctions in the natural world.

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It is, however, far from clear how to harness the energy, courage and creativity displayed on the streets in Seattle. Corporate domination is all around us in every country, yet it is difficult to know how to effectively strike out against it. However consider the following:

- **International Alliances.** The most important aspect of Seattle is the possibility it suggests for an international labor/environmental/citizen coalition against corporate dominance, the dominance of growth over nature and the supremacy of profits over the lives of people. It was amazing to see thousands of people from all walks of life together in the streets in Seattle, bravely standing up to the WTO and its police.

Labor leaders mobilized massive numbers of their constituency to participate in the protest. Despite the fact that they started backpedaling even before November 30, realizing that their own rank and file were getting beyond the reformism of the Democratic Party, sell-out unions, the labor march "monitors" couldn't stop thousands of steelworkers, teamsters, longshoremen, and other workers from getting a radical education in the teargas-filled streets. Despite lifestyle differences, workers and environmentalists have common enemies and common goals.

Even more significantly, Seattle propelled US workers and environmentalists into a global coalition against globalization with movements worldwide. Workers in Europe, Asia and Central and South America have been opposing what is often known as "neo-liberalism" for years, while amazingly, the topic was completely absent in US public discussion. No more. As corporations and government goes global, our resistance must also go global.

The US government has been the main proponent of the WTO and free trade from the start. It must be clear now to domestic movements in countries around the world that there are splits within American society on globalization. The task of the international movement against globalization is now to crack those splits wide open. We must learn how to combine opposition to globalization from the "South", "developing" nations who suffer from trans-national corporate colonialism, with movements in the North.

- **Reviving Localism.** The alternative to globalization is a return to the local. This means local control over politics, production and resources, and a return to self-sufficiency.

mainstream union capitulation

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In the biggest global victory for workers in decades, thirty thousand unionists and tens of thousands of students, environmentalists, and human rights activists stopped the WTO in its tracks and sent its 133 trade ministers home in utter defeat. The Battle of Seattle has made it almost impossible for the WTO to take major new steps in the next few years to further drive down wages, working conditions, and environmental standards throughout the world. Before the week of protests, most workers in the US and abroad had never even heard of the WTO, but now the capitalist governments that run it and their thieving corporate masters can no longer work quietly in the dark to undermine workers and farmers everywhere. Seattle may well be the first step for working people, a turning of the tide.

This was the first major political protest by workers in decades. Major unions such as the steelworkers and the ILWU mobilized thousands of their members. Over 3,000 workers from Canada and delegations from many countries around the world joined together to make their voices heard. West Coast ILWU longshoremen shut down the coast for 8 hours, and Seattle taxi drivers went on strike on November 30.

The protest was the most important linking up of the environmental movement and human rights movement with labor since the 1960s civil rights movement. It was the power of this alliance that brought the WTO down, uniting labour's numbers and organization with the daring civil disobedience and broad based support of students, environmentalists, and other activists. It is this newly forged alliance that will give workers the strength they need in every city in the country.

Most of the coalition that came to protest the WTO had a clear demand—get rid of it. But John Sweeney and the other top labour leaders had other ideas. They wanted a "partnership," a seat at the table for union officials, in keeping with the support for Clinton and Gore these unions have.

Pursuing this strategy of not breaking

protest of most activists. But the rank and filers had other ideas.

While police were using gas on the demonstrators, unionists left their stadium and headed downtown. The march marshals sought to prevent the unionists from reaching the protesters. They physically blocked two intersections and sought to divert the marchers towards another hotel, where they said a sit-in would take place. They were primarily interested in preventing the linking up of the thousands of youth with the unionists in battle against the police and the WTO.

Many workers marched right past the marshals. The ILWU and other unionists went downtown to join the youth who were protesting. In one instance, police were chasing some youth and saw a delegation of longshoremen. The police quickly retreated. The steelworkers had brought hundreds of striking workers from Oregon Steel and Kaiser Aluminum to Seattle for the whole week, and they got a view of American justice that will never go away.

This was just the start of a tumultuous 4 day police riot. The police also attacked a steelworkers march a few days later with teargas.

Only the alliance of rank and file workers with students, environmentalists, and other activists made this victory possible. As many workers themselves noted, without the civil disobedience that tied the conference in knots, a polite labour rally would have just resulted in a few editorials. And without the presence and active participation of thousands of trade unionists in the militant demonstration in the center of Seattle, the police would have used mass arrests from the start to sweep "a few crazies" from the convention center. But with this alliance, the protesters could not be dismissed or massively repressed. We won this round. The WTO and the capitalists lost.

For the working class, this was an important and historical political action against the multinationals and the US government. John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO as well as Hoffa, Jr. of the Teamsters and most of the leadership will seek to keep this mobilization contained. The political danger

forced out of business. Constant competition enforces the rule: grow or die. This process operates regardless of whether this growth benefits or hurts *human beings* or the environment.

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So even if economic growth makes life "better," and even if one never has "enough stuff," a system with no goal but growth is a doomed system. At some point, the economy can't grow any more because of limits imposed by *nature*. Again, transnational corporations and the capitalist system structurally have no ability to deal with this reality.

Because the "developed" world already uses most of the world's resources, developed economies need to considerably reduce their size, and reorganize around principles other than continued growth. Since almost all the benefits of economic growth go to the most wealthy tiny percentage of the population, it is likely that developed countries could stop growing and reduce resource use and still raise the poorer segments of the population out of poverty by redistributing the wealth.

Free trade agreements and policies probably *do* increase economic growth, but such growth is an inappropriate goal. It is clear that free trade policies strengthen the power and wealth of transnational corporations, which become better able to push even more growth. Simultaneously, free

environmentalists have common enemies and common goals.

Even more significantly, Seattle propelled US workers and environmentalists into a global coalition against globalization with movements worldwide. Workers in Europe, Asia and Central and South America have been opposing what is often known as "neo-liberalism" for years, while amazingly, the topic was completely absent in US public discussion. No more. As corporations and government goes global, our resistance must also go global.

The US government has been the main proponent of the WTO and free trade from the start. It must be clear now to domestic movements in countries around the world that there are splits within American society on globalization. The task of the international movement against globalization is now to crack those splits wide open. We must learn how to combine opposition to globalization from the "South", "developing" nations who suffer from trans-national corporate colonialism, with movements in the North.

• **Reviving Localism.** The alternative to globalization is a return to the local. This means local control over politics, production and resources and a return to self-sufficiency on a local basis. This doesn't mean that there would be no trade, just that people in a particular region shouldn't have to "compete" with people around the world in every human enterprise from farming to factories. Workers and citizens around the world should *cooperate* to realize common goals: human happiness, meeting human needs for food, housing, health care, mobility, and creativity, and maintaining the natural environment on which we all depend.

Localism means valuing diversity. Cultures around the world have evolved beautiful and important differences in tastes, food, music, values, etc. which are being quickly destroyed through globalization. A city in Asia shouldn't have the same chainstores as one in California. The "free" trade economists assume that a peasant in Indonesia wants all of the clutter found in an American subdivision (TV, products, clocks). Advertising is beaming consumer culture around the world to ensure a normalization of desire. For sure, there are many benefits to development, but there is no

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Pursuing this strategy of not breaking with Clinton and Gore, but being pushed by tens of thousands of rank-and-filers to protest the WTO, Sweeney and company planned a tame protest, keeping the tens of thousands of labour marchers away from the WTO meeting-place and the militant

opportunity for societies to choose and reject the shape that it will take.

Localism means using appropriate technology and resources, eating food that can be produced locally, and using energy sources that can be locally produced and controlled (without exporting the waste). Modest alternatives like Community Supported Agriculture, local currencies and barter, should be encouraged.

E-commerce, the media darling of the hour, is a terrible threat to local self-sufficiency. It centralizes commerce into a few powerful, distant corporations and completely removes commerce from local accountability. At the



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next riot, how about targeting a Webvan.com truck?

• **New Value System.** Underlying all of this, we must develop an "ethic of resistance" to global corporate domination of our lives. The economy long ago abandoned serving human needs, and took on an internally destructive "logic" of its own. Everyday our jobs serve not ourselves or our neighbors and family, but a system which is enslaving us and destroying the earth. The time has arrived to resist the machine with every tool available to destroy it. Perhaps Seattle was the first sign of a new culture growing out of the ruins of the old.

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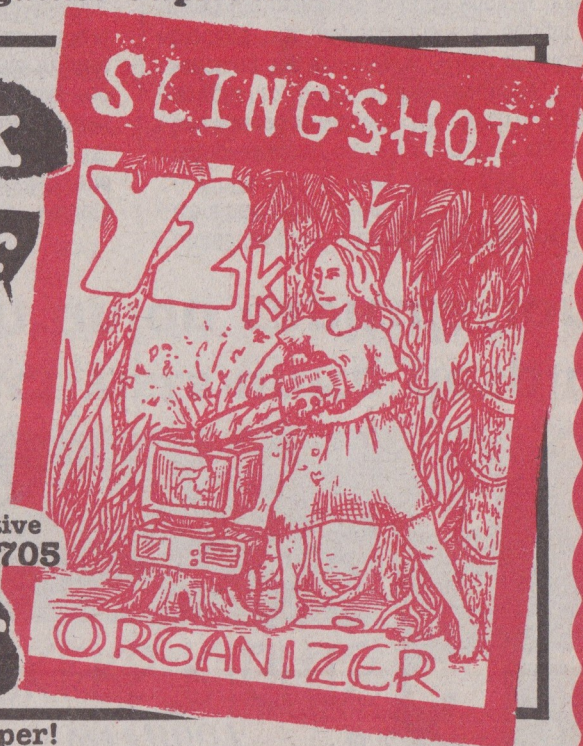
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